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did not take more pains to make his present characters live, as Jethro Bass and Richard Carvel have done. In fact, many of the minor personages like Horace Bentley and Mr. Langmaid are much more alive than Hodder, who is often a mere mouth-piece for the author. Even the love affair between the rector and Parr's daughter is too full of preachings on both sides to be artistic, much less romantic. In this respect the book is a distinct second to *Robert Elsmere*, its immediate prototype.

We may quarrel with Mr. Churchill's views and we may feel dissatisfied with the book's failure to fulfil some of the essentials of the novelist's art, but we must admire the first attempt to adequately reflect the religious unrest of our decade in a book which rings true as a sincere attempt to make Christianity Christian and finds a refuge neither Unitarian nor Socialistic.

W. S. RUSK.

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V. V.'S EYES. By Henry Sydnor Harrison. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

As one critic puts it, Mr. Harrison's *V. V.'s Eyes* is "unique among contemporary novels in that it is alive to its fingertips,—pricked anywhere, it bleeds." And this expresses felicitously what everyone will feel when he reads this new book by the author of *Queed*,—a novel which realizes the wishes booklovers had at Mr. Harrison's début two years ago. It is the sort of book that makes one feel happier and nobler for having read it. And what gives still more cause for rejoicing, the present volume is not only as good as its predecessor but a distinct advance both in technique and interest.

Wisely taking as his title, *V. V.'s Eyes*, the author has traced inimitably the change a Southern belle's ideals undergo when she comes in contact with Dr. Vivian, the slum doctor, who is more concerned with the preservation of her soul than with her beauty. Guided by her "Mama", Cally Heth is fast rushing into a marriage with a millionaire lawyer of New York's Four Hundred, when "V. V." appears and by his whimsical, child-like gaze and his gentle optimism begins the regeneration of this social butterfly. It is just here that the author has shown

most brilliantly his skill in delineating character. Though the entire book is taken up with the transformation, the changes are so subtly drawn that there is not a single break in the psychological transition. The reader is swept along with no thought save that the characters are as real as life itself.

There are such a host of scenes and episodes that charm or thrill, it is almost impossible to speak in restrained terms. The meetings between Cally and the Doctor, for instance, are always tense with interest,—he, an idealist of the gentlest sort, and she, “the loveliest of the Huns”. It is another of the author’s triumphs that he stops short of exaggeration and sentimentalism, thus leaving two of the most beautiful figures of recent fiction real yet ideal.

The tragic ending of the book is saved from a slight melodramatic atmosphere only by the native skill of the author, and forms, perhaps, the one unfortunate feature of the story. It is an artistic success, however, and gives a chance for a final comment on the Doctor’s life. “If he was much loved, it was because he loved much.”

W. S. RUSK.

NEW LEAF MILLS. By William Dean Howells. New York: Harper & Brothers.

This latest novelette by the Dean of American Letters is a delightful picture of pioneer life in the Middle West shortly after the Mexican War. Mr. Howells has lost none of his peculiar skill in portraying character and events, making the most commonplace facts interesting and important. The vividness and clear-cut descriptions of frontier life stamp the volume as more than a book of the hour. Future historians may well gather “local color” from its pages. Whether the author is writing of his own experiences as a boy or not, his portraiture is of the most realistic type. The central figure, Owen Powell, is a dreamer of the better sort who after failure in the city tries cheerfully to found a “model community” in the woods. When after many misfortunes he is forced back to the town he begins a new venture with unabated enthusiasm. While there is no attempt made to develop any of the characters, the psy-